



Meal Appeal

Attracting Customers





www.fns.usda.gov/tn

Source documents for Meal Appeal include:

Fresh-2-U The Florida Way, Florida Departments of Education and Agriculture

Five Star Food Presentation: Merchandizing School Meals, Maryland State Department of Education, Nutrition and Transportation Services Branch, Stewart Eidell, Nutrition and Education Training Specialist

Strategies for Success, California SHAPE, 1995, California Department of Education

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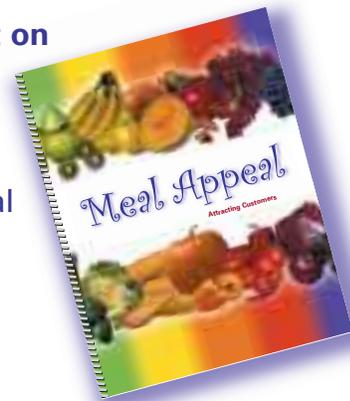
Introduction



You work hard to plan and prepare high quality meals, and you have a good product to sell. Now you just have to entice your students to eat the nutritious meals you're serving! Students are a tough audience, so you have to be especially creative in promoting school meals. This tool can help.

You'll find information in this booklet on

- Presenting foods
- Providing customer service
- Promoting school meals with special emphasis on fruits and vegetables.



You can refer to the other two booklets in the tool for information on purchasing fruits and vegetables (*Quality Food for Quality Meals*) and on preparing and presenting them—for salad bars, salads-to-go, and salad shakers (*Tricks of the Trade: Preparing Fruits and Vegetables*). The focus of all three booklets is on offering more fruits and vegetables and encouraging students to choose them—to combat overweight and obesity and to improve their health. For additional information and ideas, see Team Nutrition's *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*.

Take on the Competition

You can boost your chances for success by offering foods and creating promotions similar to the ones your students see in the restaurants they like. This means you have to study the competition. Ask students where they eat and why. Explore the places they name. Then assess how your foodservice stacks up.

When you visit the competition, ask yourself:

- What attracts the students?
- What features do these places have in common?
- Are students eating in these restaurants or just meeting there?
- What kinds of signage and marketing do these restaurants use?
- How do the employees interact with the students?
- Are students choosing foods that are not currently offered in the cafeteria?
- Are fruits and vegetables offered? If so, how are they presented?

Then evaluate the school cafeteria—as students may see it:

- Is the cafeteria a comfortable place to hang out?
- Is the food appealing? How does the food look?
 - Are there pleasant food aromas?
 - What is the first thing a student sees in the serving line?
 - Does staff place food on the plate/tray to look attractive?
 - Do garnishes complement the flavor, color, and texture of the foods?
 - Where are fruits and vegetables presented on the line? How are they offered? Do they look fresh and appealing?
 - Would you like to eat here?
- Evaluate your customer service.
 - Does the staff interact positively with the students?
 - Does the staff encourage students to try fruits and vegetables?
- Evaluate your food quality.
 - Does the foodservice staff taste the meals they serve?
 - Would foodservice staff choose to eat this food?
 - Is the quality of the food consistent from day to day?
- Evaluate your facilities.
 - Are facilities and equipment clean and without clutter?



You can boost your chances for success by offering foods and creating promotions similar to the ones your students see in the restaurants they like.

Once you have answered these questions, you can think about how to improve your program and meet the competition head-on. You can decide how to accentuate the positives of your in-house restaurant, the school cafeteria.

Before undertaking major changes, speak with school or district representatives to make sure you are complying with district, State, and Federal regulations. You

Focusing on Presentation

We eat with our eyes—then our mouths.

If it looks good, we'll taste it. If it tastes good, we'll eat it.

will also need the support of your principal, teachers, and custodial staff. Once you have a green light, plan to convene a student advisory group to help you decide how to make the changes and then market and promote your meal service. Grab your customers' attention as soon as they enter the serving area. Presenting food creatively can turn a dull looking foodservice line into a bountiful marketplace of healthful and appetizing eating opportunities. Emphasize fruits and vegetables by making them the most attractive part of your meal.

Good Food Presentation

- Increases Eye Appeal
- Stimulates Appetite
- Takes Food to the Customers

Increase Eye Appeal Light

- Consider under-counter or track lighting to enhance the appearance of foods.



Color

Use fruits and vegetables to paint an appetizing picture.

- Proper cooking is a must! It ensures bright, crisp colors.
 - For maximum color, batch-cook foods in small batches just before you serve them.
 - Avoid using poor quality ingredients, overcooking, holding foods longer than 20 minutes.



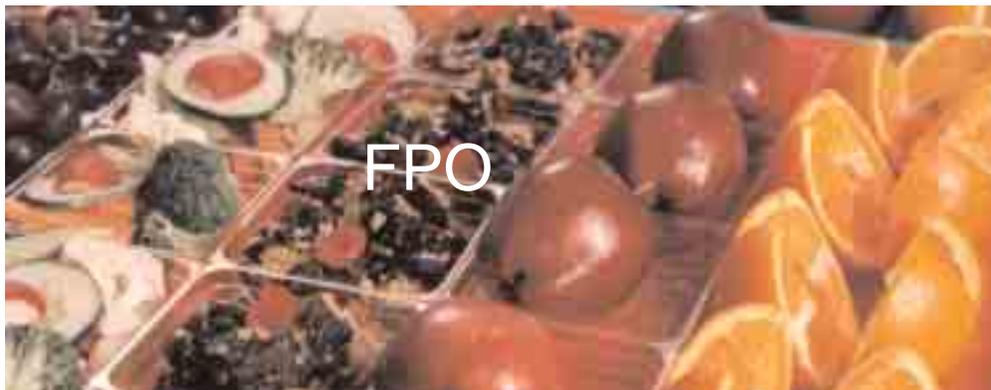
Properly cooked



Overcooked

Focusing on Presentation

- Make the most of the array of natural colors.
 - Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables that make your line colorful.
 - Contrast colors to catch students' attention.
 - Concentrate colors for maximum effect.



- Garnish the food. (See pages 34–35 in the Appendixes for color ideas.)
 - Use ingredients in the recipe as a garnish.
 - Add cut fruit or vegetables to the top of a dish for color contrast.
 - Choose a garnish that is a different shade or color than the dish.
Use sliced red bell pepper rings or julienne carrots to garnish green beans.
Use cherry tomatoes to garnish salad greens.
- Plan the fruits and vegetables in your menus to include at least two colors.
 - A few fresh strawberries can add just the spark you need to enhance canned fruits or fresh salads.
 - Add a few spinach and romaine leaves to iceberg salad mix to enrich the color.



Add interest by combining natural shapes or creating new shapes.

Shapes

Add interest by combining natural shapes or creating new shapes.

- Vary the cuts in the food.
 - Carrots can be sticks, julienne, medallions, shredded (fine, medium, coarse), diced, angle cut slices, crinkle cut, whole, or baby carrots.
 - Combine shapes in a dish—green peas with carrot medallions.
- Vary shapes of food on the line.
 - Surprise customers with unexpected shapes—cut food into triangles instead of squares, diamonds instead of rectangles.
 - Use cookie cutters to add interest to ordinary foods.
- Cut sandwiches in squares, circles, or triangles. How many other ways can you cut a sandwich?

Simplicity

Simple, clean lines and shapes are most pleasing to the eye.

- Place garnish in the center, side edge, or corner(s) of the pan.
- Clean lines attract the eye and focus the attention.
- Line decorations should enhance the food—not compete with it.



Focusing on Presentation

Height

Height showcases food and gives a sense of abundance.

- Keep serving pans full, making it easy for customers to see the complete array of options.



Make food attractive by stimulating all five senses.

- Add height to meals with other ingredients. For example, adding shredded lettuce to a sub sandwich adds little cost but increases appeal to students.
- Choose containers that add height to the line.

Packaging

- Put salads in clear plastic clamshells, on Styrofoam plates covered with clear tops or clear wrap, or in 12-16 ounce clear soft plastic cups with clear domed lids without holes. This gives students a good look at the food and adds wonderful color to your serving line. To find packaging options, visit the Foodservice and Packaging Institute, Inc. Web site at www.fpi.org for a listing of manufacturers and products. Also, work with your distributors to identify the products they have available, and determine which ones work best for you.

Stimulate the Appetite

Make food attractive by stimulating all five senses. Let your students

- *See it:* beautifully presented food encourages customers to select and try it.
- *Smell it:* aroma enhances the attraction of food and increases the anticipation to taste it.
- *Taste it:* fresh, well-prepared food provides positive experiences physically and emotionally.
- *Feel it:* a variety of textures and temperatures enhances the enjoyment of the meal.
- *Hear it:* crisp, crunchy food is fun to eat.



Focusing on Presentation

Contrast textures in a dish.

- Toasted sesame seeds sprinkled on green beans

Weave texture through the menu.

- Crusty garlic bread, tender ravioli, and crunchy broccoli salad

Vary the temperatures of foods.

- Hot vegetable soup with a cool, crisp green salad, and crackers

Choose textures, colors, and flavors that complement each other. Combine foods that children like with new, less familiar foods. Make food fun by providing finger foods that add sensory stimulation and make sample tasting easy.

Use Specialty Bars for Fun

Use specialty bars to expand your cafeteria and make it a fun and ever-changing eating scene. Look for diagrams of salad bar setups and recipes for salads-to-go and salad shakers in the *Tricks of the Trade: Preparing Fruits and Vegetables* booklet.

Take the Food to Your Customers

Presentation includes not only creating eye appeal and stimulating the appetite; it also includes physically getting the food to the students—which can have a dramatic impact on participation. Many high schools have followed the lead of their competitors and have gone to the food-court-style operation and the use of satellite carts, kiosks, cafes, walk-up windows, and vending machines.

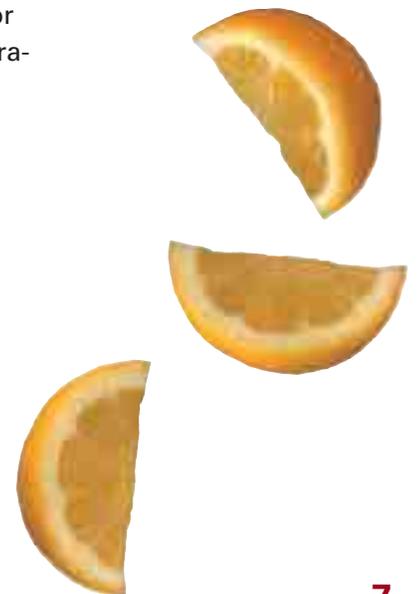
These alternatives are great options for speeding up the process and encouraging more students to eat school meals and healthier foods. The number of satisfied customers more than pays for the extra effort it takes to arrange for equipment and staffing. However, be sure to work with the school administrators and staff to avoid congestion and ensure the safety of the students.

Here are some tips:

- Position satellite carts or à la carte lines away from entranceways.
- Avoid areas where classes are still in session.
- Make sure meal lines don't cross.
- Keep serving lines from crossing the dish return line.
- Keep registers close to the food lines.
- Rope, chain, or mark off areas for students to form lines.
- Provide clear, large, attractive signs to designate each food line.
- Work with school administration to stagger class arrival times in the cafeteria.



Choose textures, colors, and flavors that complement each other.



Focusing on Presentation



Satellite Cart and Kiosk Ideas

Use carts and kiosks to feature fresh fruits and vegetables. Serve them in a clear clamshell and be sure to keep them cool.

Some tips:

- Have a cash box or register on the cart and offer the components of a reimbursable meal.
- Price reimbursable meals competitively with à la carte items.
- Staff the cart with two foodservice workers—one to handle food and one to handle cash.
- Place carts in an outside patio area to avoid congestion in the cafeteria.
- Place carts and kiosks where students gather during lunch, such as outdoor commons, band building, gym, or near parking areas. Interview students to determine the best locations.
- Cover as many areas of campus as possible with carts and kiosks to encourage students to eat on campus.

Consider establishing an outdoor or courtyard café.

Walk-Up-Window Café

If budget and physical set-up allow, why not create an outdoor or indoor Walk-Up-Window Café?

Customers can come to a pass-through window to the cafeteria and select prepackaged items. A menu board can highlight healthy lunch choices that include fresh fruits and vegetables. Healthy combination meals might include:

- Turkey wrap with lettuce and tomato, fruit cup, milk choice, oatmeal raisin cookie
- Chicken caesar salad shaker, whole-grain crackers, mixed fruit cup, milk choice
- Tuna pita, carrots and celery with lowfat dip, milk choice, melon balls
- Vegetable sub sandwich with cheese, minestrone soup, fresh fruit, milk choice



Courtyard Café

Consider establishing an outdoor or courtyard café. Similar healthy lunch combinations can be offered if refrigeration units or coolers are available. Customers may select prepackaged items and pay a cashier as they would in the cafeteria.



Focusing on Presentation

Refrigerated Vending Machines

Refrigerated vending machines allow school foodservice operations to sell fresher, healthier, and more appealing foods and to generate additional revenue. Promote nutritious foods such as:

Fresh fruits **Fresh fruit cups** **Fresh vegetable cups with lowfat dip**

Salads-to-go **100% fruit juice** **Cottage cheese and fruit cups** **Salad shakers**

Wraps **Sub sandwiches** **Baby vegetables (such as baby carrots) with dip**

Fresh pineapple pushups **Yogurt/fruit combos** **Pita sandwiches** **Celery**

sticks with peanut butter

Marketing—the Easy Way

Don't feel overwhelmed—simple changes can make a big difference. Here are a few quick tips:

- Fresh fruit can add color and interest to canned fruit. Put a cherry, red grapes, or sliced kiwifruit on top of fruit cocktail or canned pears to brighten them up.
- Move fresh fruits and vegetables to the front of the serving line. By offering these selections first, students will select more instead of racing past them once they pick up their hot item.
- Pre-portion cooked vegetables and place them so students can help themselves.
- Display whole fruits in baskets near the register. Keep them fresh and appetizing. Add a sign advertising these choices.
- Add the static clings (included in this guide) to the sneeze guard to remind students to select fruits and vegetables.
- Make the fruit and vegetable selections the most attractive and bountiful part of the line.
- Decorate with posters of beautiful fruits and vegetables to reinforce the idea that these are good choices.
- Jazz up the names of the menu items and add signage to your serving line.
- Display a sample meal, including salad and vegetable dish for students to see before entering the line to make their selections.
- Offer tasting samples of new items as students enter the serving line, or pass them around the lunchroom while they are eating, so they can taste test the fruit or vegetable before it is offered on the line. Promote these as “free samples.”



Make the fruit and vegetable selections the most attractive and bountiful part of the line.

Delivering Customer Service

What Are Some Basic Customer Needs?

- To feel important
- To feel respected
- To feel welcome
- To be recognized
- To feel appreciated
- To get tasty, nutritious food
- To feel comfortable

Customers Are the Reason We Are Here!

- Customers are not dependent on us; we are dependent on them.
- Customers are not required to participate in the meal programs; they choose to participate.
- Customers are not an interruption to our work; they are the purpose for it.
- Customers are not to be argued with or challenged; we want their business.
- Customers provide us with our jobs; fewer customers can result in fewer foodservice positions.
- Customers are coming to us to have their needs met.

Excel at Customer Service

Nutritious school meals are a good deal! But that may not be enough to increase participation in school meal programs and get children to consume more fruits and vegetables. You need to take time to focus on the customer's needs if you want to meet and beat the competition. The staff on the serving line have opportunities every day to be friendly and to encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables.



Planning for excellent customer service is a step-by-step process:

- Decide what works best and what should be changed.
- Consider available resources.
- Set goals.
- Develop policies and procedures.
- Look to hire staff who are naturally inclined toward customer service.
- Train employees. Potential areas for training are:
 - Interacting with customers
 - Maintaining a helpful attitude toward co-workers and customers
 - Dressing appropriately
 - Being courteous and using good manners
 - Greeting and acknowledging customers
 - Communicating well—for example, speaking in full sentences
 - Using nonverbal communication that projects a willingness to help customers
 - Smiling and making eye contact

Delivering Customer Service

- Handling complaints and nonroutine situations
- Handling customers with special needs
- Understanding products, and menu and program requirements
- Practicing active listening
- Personal hygiene/cleanliness of work environment and serving area
- Food safety.
- Move customer-oriented staff to front-of-the-house positions and those less customer-oriented to back-of-the-house positions.
- Obtain feedback, monitor results, and revise procedures accordingly.

The National Food Service Management Institute has several materials you may find useful, especially *Go For the Gold With Customer Service*. Visit the Web site at www.nfsmi.org and find it listed in the Resource Guide.



Get Your Customers Involved

If you want to know what students will eat, *ask them*. Create a student advisory group, and be strategic in selecting students. Here are some recruiting possibilities:

- Student Council or Nutrition Advisory Council
- Representative from each grade level
- Multicultural Clubs to ensure diversity
- DECA (marketing organization), honor societies, other student clubs and organizations



- Students who are not currently eating school meals
- Class with the highest participation in breakfast and/or lunch
- Family Living Class, Gourmet Cooking Class, or other nutrition- or health-related classes
- PTA members and their children

Consider giving community service credit for participation in the student advisory group.

**If you want to know
what students will
eat, ask them.**

Delivering Customer Service

Be prepared to listen to your students' recommendations and follow through on their ideas. Then these students can be your cheerleaders—they can spread the word that you listened and made changes, and their enthusiasm can influence their friends to participate in the program.

Providing serving options gives students choices and speeds up service, giving them more time to eat.

Clinton City Schools in North Carolina involve students in grades 3-12 in monthly roundtables with the superintendent and school board. Over lunch, students raise issues of school policy and operation, and the quality of school meals is usually a discussion topic. School foodservice staff then take action to address the concerns. Some examples include adding chicken fajitas and steamed squash to the menu. The school system has seen a steady increase in participation.

Pinellas County, Florida, has developed Student Involvement Day. The Café Manager may work with a group of students, such as the student council or a single classroom, each month to develop the menu for that month's Student Involvement Day. After reviewing the nutritional requirements for a healthy meal, the manager or teacher works with a list of menu options to help the students create "their menu." The students learn about healthy eating and then get to enjoy seeing their menu ("Mrs. Smith's Class Menu," for example) on the day it is served. This is particularly effective with younger children.

Plan Menus with Students

Use the script and worksheet—adapted from California SHAPE, *Strategies for Success*—on page 36 to develop a reimbursable menu using a food-based menu planning system that students like and that meets the dietary guidelines and nutrition standards. Helping them understand the importance of choosing foods that help them feel good, grow strong, and do well in school will have long-term positive benefits.



Enhance the Eating Environment

Many factors affect a student's decision to participate in school meal programs. Time, location, accessibility, and image all play a part—in addition to menus, price, and food presentation. You can help create a positive eating environment by making sure that:

- Food is available at convenient and attractive locations. Salad bars and other serving options help create interest and excitement about trying new foods.



Delivering Customer Service

- Students feel safe and comfortable. This allows students to concentrate on eating their meal and enjoying the company of fellow students.
- The cafeteria atmosphere is appealing. Eating should be a pleasant experience. The more pleasant the surroundings, the greater the chance students will respond positively to the food choices you provide them.
- Students have enough time to eat. Providing serving options gives students choices and speeds up service, giving them more time to eat.



Look around the eating environment to see how it can be improved. One of the first questions to ask is, “Would I choose to eat here?” Remember, customers always have a choice, even if the only other option is to bring a meal from home. You have no opportunity to increase students’ fruit and vegetable consumption and promote their good health if they are not eating school meals. Ask your students for suggestions.

Improving the cafeteria environment is more challenging in some of the older schools. Students can really be helpful in these situations. If you show that you are interested in making the cafeteria pleasant for them and if you listen to and carry out the suggestions they make, they will begin looking for ways to improve the cafeteria and meal programs.

Students at Kingsford High School and Middle School in the Breitung School District, Kingsford, Michigan, work with foodservice staff to make their cafeteria a welcoming, festive place. Television monitors (a big screen at the high school) allow students to watch the school’s sporting events and the news channel. Oldies music also helps to keep an upbeat atmosphere. It’s a place students can call their own. The high school has wallpaper border, matching valances on the windows, and pictures on the wall—all in a muted fruit pattern. At the middle school, the large windows provide a great view of the courtyard where students eat lunch at picnic tables.

Remember, customers always have a choice, even if the only other option is to bring a meal from home.

Delivering Customer Service



Decorate

The cafeteria atmosphere is as important as the food and the service. Young children tend to enjoy bright colors, whimsical characters, and cartoon heroes. Older students may appreciate a more sophisticated approach with seasonal or sports-oriented displays and popular music playing in the background.

Be sure to surround students with colorful visual images of fruits and vegetables to remind them of these healthful eating options.

- Use the posters in this guide, and contact fruit and vegetable associations to see the materials they provide *free of charge*. Copies of *Enjoy Fruits and Vegetables* can be ordered from the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345.
- Use Team Nutrition's *Feed Me* poster, which has been a very popular item for older children. Find it at www.fns.usda.gov/tn.
- Purchase the *5 A Day The Color Way* materials from the Produce for Better Health Foundation. One of these posters is included in this package. Visit the Web site at www.5aday.org to see what else is available.
- Add posters of specific fruits and/or vegetables when you are featuring them on your line. Visit the Produce Marketing Association's Web site at www.aboutproduce.com to identify the fruit or vegetable you target and any consumer group supporting it that has materials available for schools.
- Use the static clings provided in this guide (Appendix pages 57 to 59) on the sneeze guards or small posters/magazine cutouts or any other items to draw students' attention to the fruits and vegetables you are offering. This is especially important if these items are in the center of your line with no foodservice person staffing that section.



Use Team Nutrition's *Feed Me* poster, which has been a very popular item for older children. Find it at www.fns.usda.gov/tn.

Work with the teachers, particularly the art teachers, to have students create decorations. If art students are studying composition, they could use fruits and vegetables as their subjects to create pictures for the cafeteria walls or the school hallways. Have middle and high school students decorate the walls of the cafeteria to provide a background for the salad bar.

Delivering Customer Service

Students at Silver Trail Middle School in Broward County, Florida created a mural of fruits and vegetables along one wall of the cafeteria. It gave students a learning experience, added color and design to the blank walls of the cafeteria, and created interest in the salad bar.

Middle school students at Kingsbridge Middle School in Michigan routinely help with decorating the cafeteria. They do this seasonally and get a sense of ownership of the space.

If your school has a multipurpose room instead of a separate dining room, concentrate on decorating your service line area. Develop a portable display to place outside the line for students as they enter the multipurpose room. It is a great place to showcase your menu items and create interest before the students enter the food line area.

Ask for Feedback

Knowing what the students think about your school foodservice is important.

Techniques that can be used to find out include:

- Formal questionnaires and surveys
- Informal interviews
- Small group discussions
- Suggestion boxes
- Focus groups
- Taste parties
- Advisory groups

Small group discussions and focus groups can be very beneficial in getting suggestions for improvement, along with help in making the changes.

If you or another member of your foodservice team circulates routinely throughout the dining room during lunch period, you will get plenty of opinions and suggestions. Employees can also receive feedback and identify unhappy customers on the serving line, at the dish room window, or near the disposal areas in the cafeteria.

It is very important to monitor customers' acceptance of new menu items, new brands of products, new recipes, and other changes. It is also good public relations to let the customers know that the staff cares. You can use the interview form on page 41 to assess customer opinions about your operation.

Now that you have evaluated the quality and appearance of your food and dining area, considered your customer service, received some customer input, and planned for necessary improvements, it is time to think about creating excitement about the nutritious and appealing foods and meals you have to offer.

Work with the teachers, particularly the art teachers, to have students create decorations.

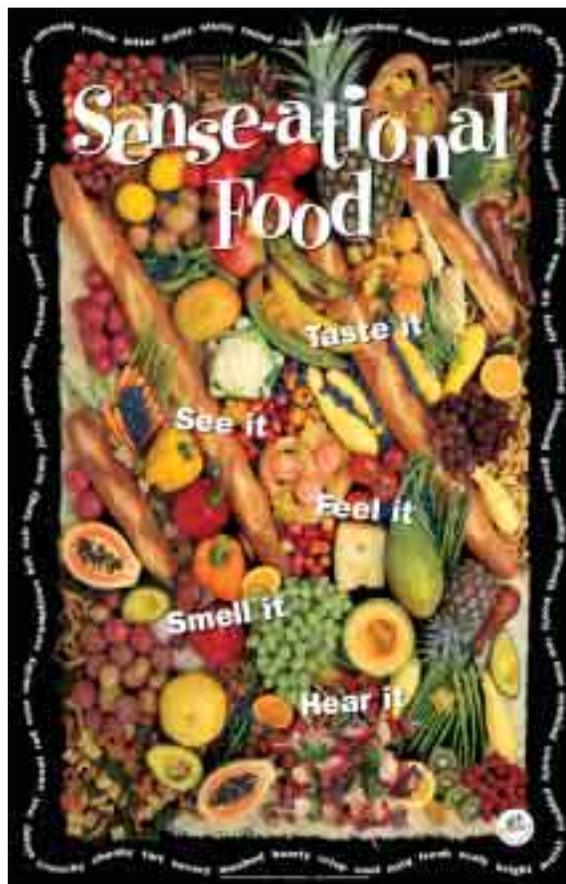
Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Jazz Up Your Menus

You can begin by making menu items sound like fun. Many students decide to purchase meals based solely on the day's menu. The menus you send home need to capture children's imaginations and entice them to try the foods.

Menus also communicate information about the program to parents, teachers, and school administrators. What a great opportunity to educate your audience and gain support for your program.

- Add zip to your menu writing.
 - Give your menu items exciting names. Offer pears with peanut butter as a Peanut/Pear Explosion or pears with carrot and raisin salad as Confetti Pears.
 - Use sensory words such as crunchy, tart, steaming, scrumptious, etc., with your menu options.
 - Use the *Sense-ational Food* poster (included in this guide) to promote the sensory aspects of food. "Let's get Descriptive" on page 42, gives you a variety of suggested words. Be creative: use the school mascot to name some items.
 - Color the names of menu items: School Bus Yellow Corn, Forest Green Beans, Fire Engine Red Tomatoes.
 - Ask your student advisory group to help you name menu items. They can have fun brainstorming with you.
 - Look at recipe titles in cookbooks to find appealing words and descriptions.
- Include nutrition facts.
 - Indicate foods that are sources of vitamins A and C, iron, calcium and other vital nutrients. (See the chart on page 43.)
 - For special promotions, include lots of information about the fruit or vegetable you are featuring.



Many students decide to purchase meals based solely on the day's menu.

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

- Add games or activities.
 - Visit the 5 A Day Web site at www.5aday.org to check out the kids' activity sheets. Add them to the back of your menu.



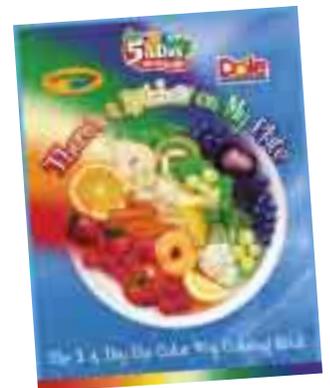
- Cafeteria art is available to download from the Dole 5 A Day Web site at www.dole5aday.com.

If you are able to print your menus in color, add color dots to indicate the colors of the fruits and vegetables in each day's menu. The Produce for Better Health (PBH) Foundation's new promotional campaign, *5 A Day The Color Way*, emphasizes the importance of eating all your colors. View their promotional items on the 5 A Day Web site at www.5aday.org. PBH has partnered with Crayola to create a curriculum titled *There's a Rainbow on My Plate*. Incorporate this idea into your menus.

Get Students' Attention With Fun Activities

Students love prizes and surprises. Use them to increase participation, reward young children for selecting new fruits and vegetables, and make eating at school fun. Here are some ideas:

- Play "Reach Into the Surprise Can."
 - Make school lunch a special occasion with a "surprise can."
 - Each student who selects a fruit and vegetable gets to reach in and take a card.
 - The lucky winner's card announces a small prize.
- Give Prizes—such as water bottles, fanny packs, Frisbees, t-shirts.
 - Promote healthy eating—and specifically eating fruits and vegetables—by giving larger prizes.
 - Look for sources of promotional materials, such as local sports stores and athletic associations.



PBH has partnered with Crayola to create a curriculum titled *There's a Rainbow on My Plate*.

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

- Track foods on 5 A Day Cards.
 - Use the cards on Appendix pages 44 and 45 to have students track the fruits and vegetables they eat at breakfast and lunch. You can download the cards from www.5ADay.org.
 - Stamp the student's card every day, and at the end of the week have students turn in their cards for a prize.
 - Give bigger prizes for students who eat at least 5 servings a day at school.



Reward students for trying new fruits and vegetables.

- Create "Lucky Sticker Day."
 - Young children love stickers. When they try new fruits and vegetables, reward them with a sticker.
 - Or to add excitement to the serving line—put stickers on some of the salad plates or fruit and vegetable containers, and give small prizes to the lucky students who get them.
- Give "Pencils for Learning."
 - Plan a word game that features fruits and vegetables.
 - Give out special pencils to students who play the game.
- Hold a Poster Contest.
 - Challenge elementary school classes to have a poster contest.
 - The winning class gets a private party in the cafeteria with tablecloths and decorations.
- Invite a Special Visitor.
 - Ask a celebrity to dine with your students (college or high school athlete for elementary schools) .
 - Have a costumed mascot visit the cafeteria. A staff member or parent volunteer can wear the costume to get students excited about eating fruits and vegetables.
 - The costume for Power Panther, the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ spokes-character, is available to schools to use free of charge.



Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

– For more information, visit the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/.



- Sponsor a “Fruity Fashion Event” for 1 week.
 - Divide classes into teams.
 - Each team draws a fruit, and the color of the fruit is their “fashion color.”
 - Designate how many points the team will get if students wear clothing items corresponding to that color—or if they create fruit and veggie costumes from paper bags.
 - Tally the team totals at the end of the week.
 - Reward the winning team with a fruit treat.
- Create a “Fruit and Vegetable Trivia Contest.”
 - Place table tents in the cafeteria with fun fruit and vegetable trivia.
 - Students receive a trivia questionnaire from the serving line.
 - They can find the answers to the questionnaire on the table tents.
 - Students enter questionnaires in a drawing for small prizes.
- Sponsor a “Veggie Walk.”
 - Create vegetable sculptures or special vegetable dishes, or purchase miniature fruit and vegetable “seedie” characters from www.shop5aday.com.
 - Set up an area in the cafeteria or a classroom for the walk, typically a large circle.
 - Divide the circle into sections named for different vegetables.
 - Play music as students walk around in the circle.
 - When the music stops, students should stop so that a student is in each of the sections. Draw the name of one of the vegetables. The student in that section wins a veggie sculpture or special veggie dish.
- Have a “Guess the Beans Contest”.
 - Fill a jar with beans, or black-eyed peas, raisins, pearl onions, or other appropriate fruits or vegetables.
 - Place it on the serving line or in the dining room.
 - Provide slips of paper and pencils for students to write their best guess.
 - Provide a box or container to hold the paper slips.
 - Award the winning student a fruit or vegetable prize. A favorite request might be fun.



Make eating fruits and vegetables fun for students.



Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Plan Promotions

Use your imagination and foodservice staff, faculty, and students to plan successful promotions. The worksheet on page 47 can help you get started. It can also be used to plan other school activities.

- **Select an objective and target group.** What do you want to accomplish and whom do you want to reach? You may be introducing a salad bar or new prepared salad choices, taste testing new fruits or vegetables before adding them to the menu, highlighting a specific fruit or vegetable, or promoting seasonally available items.
- **Determine a timeframe.** Will the promotion last for a day, a week, or a month?
- **Check the school's calendar.** You might want to plan promotions to coincide with or support other campus events, such as sports activities, dances, or plays. Or perhaps you want your promotion to be the week's big splash. Seasonal changes and holidays can offer opportunities for fun themes.
- **Select a title.** The title needs to get your customer's attention. A few possibilities are "5 A Day, Eat Your Colors Every Day," "There's a Rainbow on My Plate," "Ugli Fruit—What Is That?"
- **Plan for Publicity.** You need to specify in advance who your audience is and how you are going to get the word out. Publicity is critical to a successful promotion. But you do not need to do all the work. Local publicity resources can help, if you make the contacts and develop working relationships. Within the school, make use of the student announcements. Recruit student announcers to be part of your team. Make use of your menus, and ask art students to help with posters.
- **Work with student and parent advisory groups.** You should already be working with an advisory group. If not, consider setting one up for your special promotion and other activities, too.
- **Have displays at special events and meetings.** Announce your promotion with a display table and brochures at activities such as health fairs, Back-to-School Night, kindergarten orientation, and parent-teacher association meetings.



Fruit and vegetable promotions are opportunities to feature specific foods in your program.



The Team Nutrition *School Activity Planner* is another useful tool in planning special events. It's available at www.fns.usda.gov/tn.

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Use Monthly Promotions

Fruit and vegetable promotions are opportunities to feature specific foods in your program. The calendar on Appendix page 49 provides a listing of promotion opportunities. Check the Events Calendar on the Team Nutrition Web site (www.fns.usda.gov/tn) each year for specific dates. Also, check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site to see their Fruit and Vegetable of the Month promotion (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday/month/index.htm). Additional calendar information is available at the Dole 5 A Day Web site (www.dole5aday.com). Organizations that have specific promotional dates for their products, such as the Pear Bureau Northwest, often have materials and even a spokescharacter for you to use in your promotions. Go to the Produce Marketing Association Web site (www.aboutproduce.com) to find more information about food items and the associations supporting them, or contact your local produce vendor to learn about monthly promotions.

Teachers can provide classroom education with foodservice support.

During a promotion:

- Feature the product in your program.
- Work with teachers to have students study about the item and where it is grown.
- Develop bulletin boards or displays featuring the item.
- Put up posters.
- Have students develop artwork—get as many students as possible involved in the promotion.



After the promotion, be sure to include the featured item on your menus regularly.

Teachers can provide classroom education with foodservice staff support—or foodservice staff can be the educators with teachers' cooperation. In North Carolina, Jeffrey Swartz has seen both options work. In a district with 31 schools, he and the district staff started the Taste Explorers Club as a monthly program to encourage kids to try new foods. Kids tried food samples in the classroom as they learned about the origin, nutrition, and uses of the food. The next day, that item was available on the food line so the students could try it again. Some of the foods were snow peas, water chestnuts, star fruit, kiwifruit, and spaghetti squash. The Taste Explorers Club lessons occur on the same day of the month in every classroom. The foodservice staff provides all the tools teachers need to conduct the lesson—the food item pre-portioned into sample sizes; a napkin for each child; plastic forks; gloves for serving the food; trash bags and all the background information about the food. The teachers have nothing to prepare; they simply come to the cafeteria at a certain time, pick up their prepared tray, and take it back to the classroom. Now that he is in a smaller district (four schools), Swartz works directly with teachers and does the classroom presentations himself. Students have enjoyed trying red raspberries, blackberries, dried blueberries, dried cranberries and apricots, plus locally grown produce such as cabbage, asparagus, watermelon, strawberries, and cantaloupe.



Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Lakewood Elementary in St. Petersburg, Florida, has done several fruit and vegetable promotions. For example:

Pear

The Pear Bureau Northwest helped the school promote pears. Students wrote about pears in the classroom and colored pears to decorate a tree made from brown butcher paper in the cafeteria. Morning announcements included pear trivia and facts. The author of the PearBear book visited from Oregon, read to the 3rd grade students, and answered their questions about becoming a writer. Each student received an autographed book to keep, and PearBear himself passed out a bag that contained a pear, bookmark, tattoo, coloring sheet, and interesting information on pears. Foodservice staff introduced students to a variety of foods made with pears, and students who ate fruits and vegetables then participated in a drawing. The two winners each received a stuffed PearBear.



Remember that September is National 5 A Day Month, and March is National Nutrition Month.

Apple

Washington Apple is a great source for kid-friendly materials. During November the foodservice staff featured fresh apples. School announcements provided information about apples. The Johnny Appleseed story was read in the classes. Kindergarten students made bag puppets. An apple tree was constructed in the dining room using the brown butcher paper. Students in the 4th grade brainstormed for descriptive words about apples and created apple poems, stories, or posters. These were judged, and winners received Washington Apple characters, activity books, and erasers. All participants received bookmarks. Apples were available in a variety of ways for students to choose at lunch.

Another apple promotion idea comes from the El Monte School District in California. Each fall the district highlights apple month and features a different variety each week. At the end of the promotion, students vote for their favorite variety and it becomes the apple choice for the year. So far, Granny Smith has been the consistent favorite.

Remember that September is National 5 A Day Month, and March is National Nutrition Month. Both are especially good months to promote fruits and vegetables. Get 5 A Day materials from the National Cancer Institute at www.5ADay.gov.



Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Promote Each Season

Holidays, seasons, planting time, harvest time, and other annual milestones offer options for fruit and vegetable promotions. Feature foods that are in season or foods that children associate with specific holidays. The seasonal food chart on page 50 can help you choose which fruits and vegetables to feature.

Place more emphasis on fruits and vegetables than on the meat or meat alternate in these meals to give children a new perspective on the celebration and to encourage them to try the featured items.

Conduct Taste Tests

Let students sample new foods. This is a great way to encourage students to add new items to their diet. Continue offering samples once items have been included on the line to entice more students to try them.

Broward County, Florida, schools participating in a pilot project to increase fruit and vegetable consumption offer samples on the line using taste-test size cups and spoons. All students are offered a taste of the fruits and vegetables as they get their lunch. Fox Trail Elementary School took it a step further by involving the PTA. The school stage was decorated with lots of great fruits and veggies, and samples of fruits and veggies in small plastic cups were put on tables on the stage for every student to sample. The nutrition staff dressed in colorful shirts and the students and parents loved it. As a followup, the students come to the cafeteria once a month and pass out samples of the fruit or veggie that foodservice staff is highlighting that month. While one group of students passes out the samples, another group of students surveys responses to the samples.

Here is their survey form:

Eat More Fruits and Vegetables Survey

Grade Level _____ Food Item _____

Have you eaten this food before?

Yes No If yes, how often? _____

Did you like this food?

Yes No If no, why not? _____

Would you eat this food if it were prepared another way?

Yes No

What particular vegetable or fruit would you like to see served at lunch?



Let students sample new foods.

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Get businesses involved.

Taste tests also provide an opportunity to gain community support for your efforts. Involve local grocers, distributors, farm markets or growers, where possible, in introducing new items to students. You may want to contact your State's 5 A Day Coordinator to solicit help and ask about other activities in your area. They may be able to help you arrange for taste tests. Find the coordinator in your area on the CDC 5 A Day Web site (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday). Educate your students about local sources of fruits and vegetables, and educate local businesses about your efforts to improve students' eating habits.

Public Health Dietitians worked with Ben Franklin Elementary in Grand Forks, North Dakota, to encourage students to eat more fruits and vegetables as snacks. Local grocers donated trays of fresh veggies that were served as the classroom snack after a nutrition lesson about the importance of eating more fresh fruits and vegetables. Now the students are bringing fresh fruits and vegetables at snack time and enjoying them.

Taste tests also provide an opportunity to gain community support for your efforts.

Consider purchasing through co-ops.

Increasing offerings of fruits and vegetables, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, can be challenging. Small and rural school districts have an especially difficult time finding enough vendors to bid on their orders to receive competitive prices. Buying cooperatives (co-ops) provide a good alternative for these schools. For example, the South East Cooperative Utilizing Resources Efficiently (SECURE) is made up of 11 North Carolina school districts. Working together they buy and distribute high quality foods to their students and, as an added benefit, they introduce unusual fruits and vegetables to their students.

Promotions encouraging students to eat different types of fruits and vegetables have become common in Cumberland County, North Carolina, school cafeterias. Through SECURE, their cooperative buying partnership, they have the opportunity to participate in a program titled Farm LINC. Farm LINC is a promotion that encourages school systems in the co-op to offer specialty fruits on their menu once a month as a fresh fruit option. Cumberland County takes this promotion one step further by offering the specialty fruit to all students in a taste test as well as on the lunch serving line. These are items students do not get the chance to try every day, such as:

August – Yellow or Orange Watermelon

September – Dinosaur Eggs (Pluots)

October – Star Fruit

November – Cactus Pear

December – Horned Melon

January – Kumquats

February – Blood Oranges

March- Fresh Pineapple

April – Plantain Bananas

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables



Each month cafeteria managers receive information on the specialty fruit, along with signs and banners to hang in their cafeterias. Students can pick up a tasting of the fruit from the line as a free food item. Some cafeteria managers give a short classroom presentation to the students about the history and origin of the specialty fruit along with a tasting party.

Link the Cafeteria and the Classroom

Recruit teachers to help change children's eating behavior. School foodservice professionals and teachers, especially health educators, are natural partners. Healthy meals give students the energy and nourishment they need to succeed in the classroom, and classroom activities can encourage children to choose foods for a healthy diet.

Recruit teachers to help change children's eating behavior.

- At the beginning of the school year, involve teachers in the planning process for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. Teachers are role models for students, and they can incorporate healthy eating messages into everyday classroom activities. In many elementary schools, teachers review the menus with their students each morning. This is a great opportunity to remind students about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and to make them aware of the items available that day.
- Make the cafeteria a learning lab to expand the classroom learning experience and reinforce healthy eating choices. If students are studying a specific food and its benefits, that food could be highlighted on the menu that week. Alternatively, if a class is studying a food item, you may be able to do a classroom presentation about that food and provide samples for the children to taste.



Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Check out the Science 4 Kids Web site, the National Agricultural Library Kids Science Page Web site, and the Ag in the Classroom Web site.

At Manatee Elementary in Florida, the kindergarten students sang a song about several specific fruits being buried under the snow. After the song, the students were able to sit with the teacher and make a fresh fruit cup with those fruits and a plop of light-whipped cream on top, like "snow." Another kindergarten class was studying about Nigeria. They learned that Nigerian children love to eat fruit and were treated to a cup of mixed fruit including cantaloupe, honeydew, pineapple, and grapes. If the manager cannot always provide fruit for individual classrooms to taste, local grocers or growers may be willing to provide samples.



- Incorporate nutrition education into your education emphasis programs—such as reading.

Pioneer Elementary School in Merced, California, combined reading and nutrition education in a monthly foodservice promotion. Teachers worked with foodservice staff to encourage students to identify foods in the books they read. The class with the most different books that had foods in them received a fruit smoothie party. The foodservice director brought ingredients such as fresh strawberries, nonfat yogurt, and honey to the classroom and made smoothies for all the students. She gave them the recipe to take home, too. Needless to say, the promotion was a big success with the students and teachers.

- Check out the Science 4 Kids Web site at www.ars.usda.gov/is/kids/, the National Agricultural Library Kids Science Page Web site at www.nal.usda.gov/kids/, and the Ag in the Classroom Web site at www.agclassroom.org/ for useful information. Another source, which includes lesson plans, is the Canned Vegetable Council, Inc. Web site, Love those Vegetables, at www.cannedveggies.org.

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Vegetable/Fruit Challenge

Bloomfield, Connecticut School Food Service conducted a 15 day Vegetable/Fruit Challenge in all its elementary schools. Using Team Nutrition Grant Funds, Marilyn Ricci developed this cafeteria/classroom activity and the Challenge Chart. Each classroom established a numerical goal representing the number of vegetables/fruits the class would taste at lunchtime. Each day after lunch, the students would go to the chart to check the number of vegetables/fruits they had eaten that day. The chart is designed to show the class cumulative total so it is easy for students to see how far they are from their goal. Teachers, parents and foodservice staff reported increased consumption of vegetables/fruits during the Challenge. A copy of the Challenge Chart is included in the poster folder. It is printed on synthetic paper so washable markers will wipe off. Challenge instructions are included on page 51 of the Appendixes.

School Garden

If your school has a school garden, work with the teachers and students to harvest, prepare, and feature school-grown foods in your program. Depending on the size of the garden, these items may be provided as a taste test or added to salads or other dishes. If your school district and county health office allow, bring the students into the kitchen to clean and prepare the foods themselves. Feature the foods they have harvested with special signs, or have the students serve the foods to other students.

The William Ramsay Elementary and Cora Kelly School for Math, Science, and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia, have converted portions of their schoolyard into exciting outdoor learning areas. Both schoolyard habitats have been certified by the National Wildlife Federation and provide opportunities for students to learn not only about their environment but also about history, literature, art, math, science, and gardening. The habitats include stepping stones and painted rocks created by students, colonial herbs, Virginia cash crops, plants to help



If your school has a school garden, work with the teachers and students to harvest, prepare, and feature school-grown foods in your program.

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

teach interdependence of living things, and vegetable gardens. Students at both schools planted peanuts, squash, beans, peppers, cabbages, lettuce, onions, and radishes. The vegetables are harvested, prepared, and served by students with the help of the cafeteria managers and volunteers. Through this joint project, students have a unique opportunity to learn the whole cycle of food production.

Visit the National Gardening Association's Web site at www.garden.org or go to the Team Nutrition Web site and look for *Get Growing — From the Ground Up* under the Educator's button (www.fns.usda.gov/tn). Other gardening Web sites are Texas A and M University at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>, the California Department of Education at www.cde.ca.gov/nsd/nets/g_index.htm, and Gardens 4 Kids at www.gardens4kids.com/.

Create fun and educational bulletin boards

Bulletin boards deliver your message every day. Use one for promotions and one for nutrition education. Consider hiding fun facts and giving students rewards for locating the answers. Instead of decorating them yourself every time, involve the students. Work with the art teacher or the classroom teachers to make it an educational activity. When students are studying a country, identify fruits or vegetables grown there and ask students to develop a bulletin board that tells about them. Feature those items in your meal service.

Get students to help make a colorful fruit and vegetable collage.



Get students to help make a colorful fruit and vegetable collage. Post all five colors, and ask students to cut out and bring in pictures of fruits and vegetables and place them under the appropriate color on the bulletin board.

Post a daily reminder to choose fruits and vegetables. The American Dietetic Association includes a "daily tip" on their Web site at www.eatright.org, which may be helpful. These tips are not limited to fruits and vegetables but may give you useful information. Also, 5 A Day (www.5aday.org) and Produce

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Marketing Association (www.aboutproduce.org) Web sites have information you can use. Dole 5 A Day has downloadable fruit and vegetable art and graphics available (www.dole5aday.com). Another option is to go into the Internet and type clip art in the address to begin a search. Many of the sites offer free art.

Signs

Add signs to the serving line to attract students' attention to the school meal and the fruit and vegetable choices. Create a fruit display in a basket or on a platter near the register, and ask classes to design a sign to advertise this nutritious and appetizing choice. Then rotate the signs that the classes create. This will encourage students to select some fresh fruit before they check out.

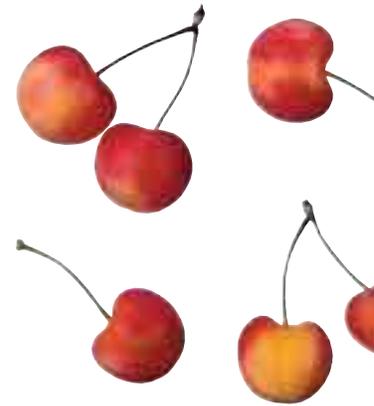
Advertise

Let everyone know what you have to offer especially during promotions. You can always promote your "Best Buy in Town" lunch in the school hallways.

Introduce your students to chefs

Bring a chef into your school to create lots of excitement among the students and teachers, and offer foodservice staff opportunities to learn new skills. Many chefs enjoy sharing their knowledge with others, especially children. Also, culinary students need service hours for certification, so this can be a win-win-win situation—for you, your students and the budding chefs.

"Chefs Connection" is a listing of chefs that support Team Nutrition on the Healthy School Meals Resource System at <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov>. If there are no chefs listed for your area, contact State or local restaurant associations, local restaurants, hospitals, and culinary schools, or contact the American Culinary Foundation (ACF) chapter in your State. To find the ACF State Chapter Presidents, click on the ACF Regional Chapters map that is also on the Web site.



Bring a chef into your school to create lots of excitement among the students and teachers.



Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Days of Taste™ is a discovery-based program provided by the American Institute of Wine and Food for fourth or fifth grade students. It helps students learn about food and how it weaves its way through daily life from farm to table. To find out more visit the Web site at www.aiwf.org.

If a chef is not available, consider having a cooking or food preparation event involving school foodservice staff, teachers, and parents. Work with the teacher to make it a classroom/cafeteria experience. Have students bring in a variety of vegetables, prepare them, and combine them into soup or snacks. Help children dice them and feel texture—then taste. Create a veggie tray so they can sample all the vegetables with lowfat dips. Children will usually try new vegetables when they help prepare them. You might also want to work with the PTA to make this a family event in the evening.

Fairs get the community involved in your school and expand the resources available to you.

Hold assemblies and use daily announcements

Promote fruit and vegetable consumption throughout the school day and at events and activities. Examples:

- Present skits at assemblies.
- Encourage students to write and record a rap or song for morning announcements.
- Invite speakers or spokescharacters (PearBear, Washington Apple, Power Panther, or other fruit and vegetable characters).
- Ask one of the classes studying about fruits and vegetables in science or social studies to share information with the whole school.
- Include a daily fruit and vegetable promotion in morning announcements. Visit www.eatright.org to see their “Tip of the Day.”

Cumberland County, North Carolina, Child Nutrition Services staff have fruit and vegetable assemblies and fairs for their elementary schools on a regular basis. The school receives a regular weekly delivery of fruits and vegetables, and the cafeteria employees cut them into bite-size pieces. Child Nutrition Services dietitians go into an assembly and do a lively presentation on the Food Guide Pyramid and the history and importance of the fruits and vegetables they are serving.

Sponsor Nutrition or Health Fairs

Hold a nutrition or health fair to educate students and parents, and generate interest in healthy eating. These can be in school for students, after school for students and parents, or among schools for the whole community. In addition to providing students and parents with useful information, fairs get the community involved in your school and expand the resources available to you.



Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Team Nutrition's *School Activity Planner* provides schools with a step-by-step guide to planning a fair. All Team Nutrition Schools receive the guide when they enroll, and all Team Nutrition materials are available free to Team Nutrition Schools. (To enroll as a Team Nutrition School, go to the Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/tn, click on Join the Team, download the enrollment form, complete it, and have it signed. Then just fax it to the number indicated, and your school will receive a kit of material.)

Manatee Elementary School in Palm Beach County, Florida, conducted a Health Fair with students as the educators. Students from their Discovery Lab (gifted and talented program) researched a variety of health topics including the food guide pyramid, brain power, bacteria and the importance of hand washing, sun protection, and physical activity. Students created display booths on their topics and then presented their findings to fellow students as the class groups visited their booths. There were 28 separate booths. This gave the students a variety of educational opportunities—some students researched and presented the information; some visited the fair. The school foodservice manager also arranged a visit by Power Panther, the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ spokescharacter. Power Panther provided an added treat of fruit and vegetable snacks as students returned to their classrooms.

Engage Your Community

You can also develop ties with the community by planning a field trip to the grocery store, a farm, a farmers market, or an orchard. These are great learning experiences for students.

An organization called "Free Field Trips" helps plan trips to grocery stores and restaurants in various areas around the country at no charge to the school. These trips offer students opportunities to sample a variety of foods at places where they might later influence family shopping decisions or buy food themselves. Call them at 1-800-987-6409 or visit their Web site at www.fieldtripfactory.com to see if they operate in your area.



When you promote fruits and vegetables in your program, you promote the good health of our children.



Focusing on fruits and vegetables offers exciting opportunities to attract students to school meals. We hope this guide will stimulate your enthusiasm and creativity. When you promote fruits and vegetables in your program, you promote the good health of our children.



Appendixes



Food Garnishing Colors

Yellow/Orange

Vegetables

- Carrots, rings, shredded, or strips
- Acorn or butternut squash meat
- Pumpkin meat
- Summer squash (yellow)
- Yellow turnips
- Corn

Fruit

- Apricot halves or sections
- Cantaloupe balls
- Grapefruit skin/zest/strips
- Orange skin/zest/strips
- Lemon sections or slices
- Nectarines
- Star fruit
- Peach halves with jelly
- Peach slices
- Persimmons
- Spiced peaches
- Tangerines
- Papaya
- Bananas

Sweets

- Apricot preserves
- Orange marmalade
- Peach preserves
- Peanut brittle, crushed
- Sugar, yellow or orange

Cheese and Eggs

- Balls, grated, strips
- Egg, hard-cooked or sections
- Deviled egg halves
- Riced egg yolk
- Rosettes

Red

Vegetables

- Beets, pickled, julienne, or sliced
- Paprika
- Pimento, chopped, strips
- Radicchio
- Radishes, red, sliced, roses
- Red onion
- Red cabbage
- Red grapes
- Red skin pears
- Red skin potatoes
- Stuffed olives, sliced
- Red peppers, rings, strips, shredded
- Tomato: catsup, chili sauce

Fruit

- Apples
- Plums
- Watermelon
- Cherries
- Red raspberries
- Cinnamon apple
- Strawberries
- Cranberries
- Maraschino cherries

Sweets

- Cinnamon drops (“red hots”)
- Cranberry glaze, jelly
- Gelatin cubes
- M&M’s
- Loganberry, raspberry
- Red jelly: apple, cherry

Food Garnishing Colors

Green

Vegetables

- Beet greens
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrot tops
- Celery leaves and stalks
- Collard greens
- Corn husks
- Cucumber skins
- Endive
- Green beans
- Green pepper strips, chopped
- Green tomatoes
- Herbs: dill, cilantro, etc.
- Kale
- Leeks
- Lettuce cups
- Lettuce, shredded
- Mint Leaves
- Olives
- Parsley, sprig, chopped
- Peas
- Pickles: Burr, gherkins, strips, fans, rings
- Scallion
- Spinach leaves
- Watercress
- Winter squash: Acorn, Buttercup
- Zucchini

Fruit

- Avocado
- Cherries
- Frosted grapes
- Green apple
- Green apple sauce
- Green plums
- Kiwifruit
- Lime wedges, zest/skin
- Papaya skin
- Pear skin
- Pineapple tops
- Watermelon skin
- Honeydew melon

Sweets

- Citron
- Gelatin cubes
- Skittles
- Green sugar
- M&M's
- Gummi Bears

White Black-Brown Brown-Tan

Vegetables

- Cauliflower
- Celery cabbage
- Celery: curls, hearts, strips
- Cucumber rings, strips, wedges, cups
- Jicama
- Mashed potato, rosette
- Onion rings
- Onion, pickled
- Radish meat
- Radishes, white

Fruit

- Apple balls
- Apple rings
- Gingered apples
- Grapefruit sections
- Pear balls
- Pear sections
- White raisins

Sweets

- Marshmallows
- Almonds
- Mints
- Whipped cream
- Powdered sugar
- Cream cheese frosting
- Sliced, hard-cooked egg white
- Shredded coconut

- Black radish skin
- Black raspberries
- Blueberries
- Caviar
- Chocolate sauce
- Chocolate-covered mint
- Eggplant skin
- Olives, ripe
- Pickled walnuts
- Prunes
- Prunes, sliced
- Raisins, currants
- Truffles

Breads

- Croutons
- Cheese straws
- Noodle rings
- Fritters
- Toast, cubes, points, strips, rings

Miscellaneous

- Cinnamon
- Dates
- French-fried cauliflower
- French-fried onions
- Mushrooms
- Nutmeats
- Nut-covered cheese balls
- Potato chips
- Rosettes
- Toasted coconut

Plan a Lunch

Plan a Lunch Script

ADAPTED FROM CALIFORNIA SHAPE



YOU WILL NEED:

- A group of students in a classroom, conference room, or the cafeteria
- Chalk and board or flip chart and felt pens
- This outline
- For each student:
 - Your school's printed menu
 - PLAN A LUNCH worksheet (see page 39)
 - School LUNCH Means Good Nutrition coloring sheets (see page 40)
 - Dietary Guidelines brochure or Food Guide Pyramid information (available at www.fns.usda.gov/tn)
 - A reward for helping (pencil, stickers, food item coupon, or fruit or vegetable snack)



WHAT TO DO:

1. **Introduce yourself (and anyone assisting you). Tell why you are here. SMILE!**

Hi! My name is _____ and I prepare food for you in the lunch and breakfast programs here at school.

I'm glad to be here with you today because I need your help in planning a lunch menu that you would like to eat.

2. **Get the students interested and involved.**

How many of you eat lunch in the cafeteria?

How many of you have helped plan a school lunch menu before?

3. **Describe your meal plan/pattern. If students are not familiar with the food guide pyramid, briefly discuss the food groups and serving sizes.**

Pass out your printed menu.

Every month you get a lunch menu like this to take home.

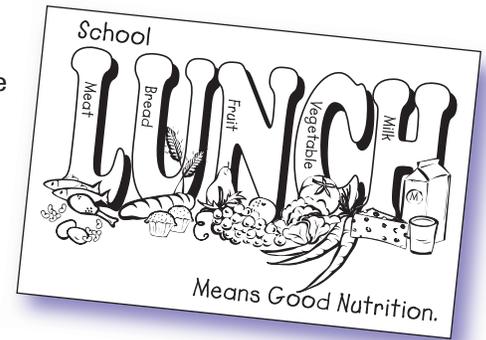
When we plan lunches for school, we have to include 5 things – can anyone tell me what they are?



Plan a Lunch

YOUNGER STUDENTS: Hold up 5 fingers. Ask students to name the meal components they know and write them on the board as they are called out. Fill in the ones they don't mention. Then pass out the School LUNCH Means Good Nutrition coloring sheet and review it briefly.

OLDER STUDENTS: Write the letters LUNCH on the board vertically (up & down). Ask students for what meal components they know, and write them to the right of the appropriate letter in LUNCH as they are called out. Fill in what they don't know to complete the word puzzle below:



Lean	meat or alternate
Unrefined (whole grain)	bread or grain
Nature's fresh	fruit
Crisp and fresh	vegetable
Half-pint lowfat	milk

4. Plan the menu, one item at a time.

Pass out the *Plan A Lunch* worksheet to each student. Explain that different colors and textures of food make the lunch more eye and taste appealing. Ask for suggestions for each of the 5 items listed on the chalkboard. Have students (especially younger ones) look at the printed menu for ideas. Be sure they realize salads can be main dishes. Also, planning should not be limited to items already being served. Listen to their suggestions for new offerings.

Okay, what is your favorite main dish, including a meat or meat substitute? What are some others?

List their suggestions on the board, and then have students vote, or somehow decide on each one. Have them write it on their worksheet.

And, what kind of bread or grain do we want with that?

Go through all 5 meal items in the same way. Be sure to help them identify some new fruits and vegetables or new ways to present familiar ones. When you get to the end, students will probably ask to have a dessert or other "extra" on their menu. Explain that this isn't always included, because the meal may already meet all the requirements.

It's okay to have extra food now and then. What would you like to add to this menu?

Highlight something about the extra they suggest that makes you feel good about serving it. For example:

I feel okay about serving ice cream because it provides some calcium to keep your bones strong. OR: A juice bar is a good choice because it is made with real fruit juice.



5. Review the menu they have planned. Tell them how it will appear on the

Plan a Lunch

printed menu. (As a courtesy, you may want to discuss this with the teacher first.)

This looks like a delicious menu! This will be printed on the menu for _____ (tell them which month and when it will be available), with your class name.

I will let your teacher know what day it will be served, and I hope you can all come eat lunch in the cafeteria that day. We will have a special table set just for you! (You will need to be creative to come up with a "cool" idea for your older students.)

6. Thank them for their help.

You have been a great help to me today, and to say "thanks" I would like each of you to have _____. (Provide whatever item you have available for them. This can be some specialty fruits and vegetables or a non-food item.)

SEE YOU AT LUNCH!



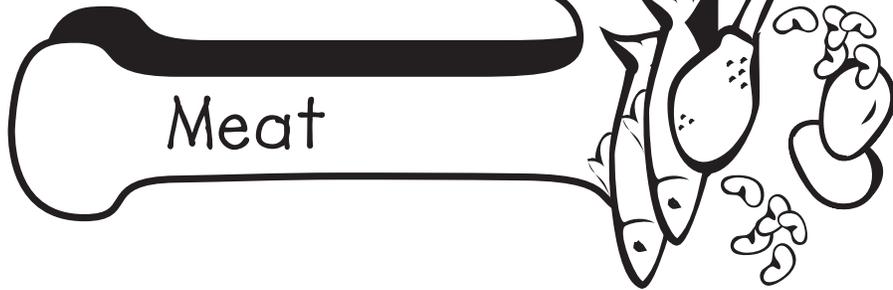
Plan a Lunch Worksheet

What goes into a school lunch?

1. Meat or Meat Substitute
 2. Breads or Grains
 3. Fruits or Vegetables
 4. Vegetables or Fruits
 5. Milk
- Healthy Choices

1 Meat or Meat Substitute		Lean & Beans
2 Breads or Grains		Unrefined, whole grains
3 Fruits or Vegetables		Nature's freshest
4 Vegetables or Fruits		Crisp & fresh
5 Milk		Half-pint, lowfat

School



Meat



Bread



Fruit



Vegetable



Milk

Means Good Nutrition.

Interview Form

Time of Interview _____

Day of Week _____

Date _____

Hi, I am _____, conducting a survey on school foodservice. If you have about two minutes to answer a few questions, we would very much appreciate your opinion.

1. How often do you eat school lunch?

Daily 2-3 times a week Once a month Occasionally

2. Rate the following as very good, good, fair, poor:

a. How would you rate the quality of the meal you had today?

very good good fair poor

b. What do you think of the variety of choices of food?

very good good fair poor

c. Do you have enough food to satisfy your appetite?

very good good fair poor

d. How would you rate the food service employees?

very good good fair poor

e. What rating would you give the atmosphere in the dining area?

very good good fair poor

f. How would you rate the value of your meal in relation to the cost?

very good good fair poor

3. What do you particularly like about your school's food service?

4. What do you particularly dislike about your school's food service?

5. What suggestions do you have?

Let's Get Descriptive

Alluring

Aromatic

Attractive

Bitter

Blackened

Bland

Bright

Brilliant

Brittle

Bumpy

Chewy

Chilly

Chunky

Clean

Coarse

Cold

Colorful

Cool

Creamy

Crimson

Crisp

Crumbly

Crunchy

Curly

Delectable

Delicate

Delicious

Distinctive

Dry

Earthy

Enticing

Exciting

Exquisite

Eye-catching

Fiery

Firm

Flaky

Flavorful

Fleshy

Florid

Fluffy

Fragrant

Freezing

Fresh

Frosty

Fruity

Fuzzy

Goosey

Gorgeous

Green

Hard

Hearty

Heavy

Hot

Icy

Inviting

Irresistible

Juicy

Knotty

Leafy

Lean

Lumpy

Luscious

Lustrous

Mashed

Mellow

Mild

Milky

Moist

Mouth-watering

Mushy

Nutty

Peppery

Pink

Piquant

Plump

Popping

Prickly

Pulpy

Pungent

Raw

Red

Refreshing

Rich

Ripe

Robust

Rough

Round

Salty

Savory

Scrumptious

Sharp

Shiny

Showy

Slick

Slurpy

Smooth

Soft

Sour

Sparkling

Spicy

Springy

Steaming

Sticky

Strong

Subtle

Succulent

Sugary

Sweet

Sweet-smelling

Tangy

Tantalizing

Tart

Tasty

Tempting

Tender

Thick

Toasted

Understated

Velvety

Verdant

Vibrant

Vivid

Warm

Wet

Wrinkled

Yellow

Yummy

Zesty

Fruit and Vegetable Sources of Vitamins

Vitamin A Sources	Vitamin C Sources	Iron Sources	Calcium Sources (nondairy)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apricots • Cantaloupes • Carrots • Collard greens • Hot chili peppers • Leaf lettuce • Romaine lettuce • Mangoes • Nectarines • Peaches • Spinach • Sweet potatoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broccoli • Cabbage • Cantaloupes • Cauliflower • Grapefruit • Green peppers • Brussels sprouts • Kiwifruit • Oranges • Papayas • Strawberries • Mustard greens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White beans • Spinach • Chickpeas (garbanzo beans) • Lentils • Lima beans • Pink beans • Winged beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spinach • Mustard greens • Collards • Beet greens • Figs • Papaya • Rhubarb • Okra • Wakame • Kelp • Turnip greens • Amaranth • Black turtle beans • Chinese Cabbage (pak choi) • Chickpeas • Hummus • Cranberry beans • Great northern beans • French beans • Lupines • Navy beans • White beans • Winged beans • Yellow beans • Chickory greens

Combining iron sources with vitamin C sources helps with iron absorption in the body.

Take the 5 A Day Challenge!

It's easy to eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Just enter a check mark each time you eat one serving. Find out if you eat 5 A Day every day!

What is a Serving?

1 Serving =

- 1 medium-size fruit
- 3/4 cup (6 oz.) of 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice
- 1/2 cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit (in 100 percent juice) or vegetables
- 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
- 1/2 cup cooked dry peas or beans
- 1/4 cup dried fruit

1 2 3 4 5



D A Y S						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
S E R V I N G S						

Count up your servings every day and you'll be on your way to 5 A Day!

© Produce for Better Health Foundation, www.5aday.com, 302-235-2329

Instructions:

Get how many colors you can eat everyday. Fill in the fruit and/or vegetable you eat each day under the color category. (See back for examples of fruits and vegetables in their color categories.) Aim for one in each of the 5 categories every day.

5 A Day The Color Way

	Blue/ Purple	Green	White	Yellow/ Orange	Red
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					



Fruits & Vegetables by Color Category

Blue/Purple

Purple Asparagus
Purple Belgian Endive
Blackberries
Black Currants
Black Salsify
Blueberries
Purple Carrots
Dried Plums
Eggplant
Elderberries
Purple Figs
Purple Grapes
Purple Peppers
Plums
Potatoes (purple flesh)
Purple Cabbage
Raisins

Green

Green Apples
Artichokes
Arugula
Asparagus
Avocados
Green Beans
Broccoli
Broccoli Rabe
Brussels Sprouts
Green Cabbage
Celery
Chayote Squash
Chinese Cabbage
(Napa/Boc Choy)
Cucumbers
Endive
Green Grapes
Honeydew Melon
Kiwifruit
Leafy greens
Leeks
Lettuce
Limes
Okra
Green Onion
Peas (Green, Snap,
Snow)
Green Pears
Green Pepper
Spinach

White

Bananas
Brown Pears
Cauliflower
Dates
Garlic
Ginger
Jerusalem
Artichokes
Jicama
Kohlrabi
Mushrooms
White Nectarines
Onions
Parsnips
White Corn
White Peaches
Potatoes (white flesh)
Shallots
Turnips

Yellow/Orange

Yellow Apples
Apricots
Yellow Beets
Butternut Squash
Cantaloupe
Cape Gooseberries
Yellow Figs
Grapefruit
Golden Kiwifruit
Lemon
Mangoes
Nectarines
Oranges
Papayas
Peaches
Yellow Pears
Yellow Peppers
Persimmons
Pineapples
Yellow Potatoes
Pumpkin
Rutabagas
Yellow Summer Squash
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potatoes
Tangerines
Yellow Tomatoes
Yellow Watermelon
Yellow Winter Squash

Red

Red Apples
Beets
Blood Oranges
Cherries
Cranberries
Pink/Red Grapefruit
Red Grapes
Red Onions
Red Pears
Red Peppers
Pomegranates
Red Potatoes
Radicchio
Radishes
Raspberries
Rhubarb
Strawberries
Tomatoes
Watermelon

Promotion Planning Worksheet

Objective: (What are we trying to accomplish?)

Activity: _____

Food Item(s): _____

Target Group: (Check one or more.)

Students Parents Teachers Administrators

Date(s): _____

Coincides with campus events? Holidays?

Theme and Title: _____

Publicity:

Print Media In-school Other _____

Dress/Decorations/Merchandising Tools: _____

Incentives/Prizes: _____

Who is responsible? _____

Costs/Expenses: _____

Evaluation: Complete after your promotion by checking the appropriate rating below.

1. How well did this promotion accomplish our objective(s)?
 poor satisfactory good excellent
2. If a new food item was introduced, was it well received?
 poor satisfactory good excellent
3. How did students respond?
 poor satisfactory good excellent
4. How did staff respond?
 poor satisfactory good excellent

What roadblocks did you face, and how did you overcome them?

What are your suggestions for improvement?

You may also want to track participation and sales to assess the economic effect of your promotion.

Promotion Evaluation Worksheet

Promotion

Evaluation

Did Promotion Accomplish Objectives?

- poor satisfactory
 good very good
 excellent

Comments

Were Items Selected Well Received?

- poor satisfactory
 good very good
 excellent

Comments

What Was Response From Students?

- poor satisfactory
 good very good
 excellent

Comments

What Was Response From Staff?

- poor satisfactory
 good very good
 excellent

Comments

What Improvements Can Be Made?

Comments

Events Calendar

January	February	March
Fiber Focus Month National Apricot Day	National Cherry Month National Hot Breakfast Month Potato Lover's Month Sweet Potato Month	National Frozen Food Month National Nutrition Month National School Breakfast Week National Agriculture Week Johnny Appleseed Day National Agriculture Day
April	May	June
Florida Tomato Month National Pecan Month Soyfoods Month	Salad Month Salsa Month International Pickle Week	Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month Papaya Month Gazpacho Aficionado Time
July	August	September
Baked Beans Month Blueberry Month National Culinary Arts Month National Salad Week	Get Acquainted with Kiwifruit Month Watermelon Day Sneak Some Zucchini Onto Your Neighbor's Porch Night More Herbs, Less Salt Day	Better Breakfast Month Ethnic Food Month National 5 A Day Month Organic Harvest Month Potato Month Food Service Employees Week
October	November	December
Peanuts Month Popcorn Month Vegetarian Month National School Lunch Week World Vegetarian Day Spinach Lover's Day World Food Day	Good Nutrition Month National Fig Week National Split Pea Soup Week Thanksgiving	Christmas New Year's Eve

Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables

FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
September October November	December January February	March April May	June July August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Broccoli • Brussels Sprouts • Cabbage • Chinese Cabbage • Cauliflower • Celery Root • Chicory • Cranberries • Cucumbers • Dates • Eggplant • Fennel • Grapes • Greens • Lettuce: Head or Iceberg • Leaf Lettuce • Mushrooms • Nuts • Okra • Mandarin Oranges • Pears • Chili Peppers • Sweet Peppers • Persimmons • Pomegranates • Pumpkin • Quince • Shallots • Spinach • Winter Squash • Star Fruit • Sweet Potatoes • Turnips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avocados • Broccoli • Brussels Sprouts • Cabbage • Chinese Cabbage • Cauliflower • Celery Root • Chicory • Dates • Fennel • Grapefruit • Greens • Lemons • Wild Mushrooms • Mandarin Oranges • Sweet Oranges • Pears • Spinach • Sweet Potatoes • Tangerines • Turnips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asparagus • Avocados • Basil • Beans • Beets • Berries • Broccoli • Cabbage • Chinese Cabbage • Cucumbers • Lettuce: Head or Iceberg • Mangoes • Okra • Sweet Oranges • Papayas • Peas • Chili Peppers • Sweet Peppers • Radishes • Rhubarb • Shallots • Spinach • Summer Squash • Turnips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apricots • Basil • Beans • Beets • Blackberries • Blueberries • Boysenberries • Carrots • Cherries • Collards • Corn • Cucumbers • Dates • Figs • Grapes • Green Beans • Limes • Mangoes • Melons • Nectarines • Okra • Peaches • Pears • Chili Peppers • Sweet Peppers • Plums • Raspberries • Summer Squash • Tomatoes • Watermelon

Vegetable and Fruit Challenge

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to identify various fruits and vegetables.
2. Students will be able to count the number of fruits and vegetables eaten at lunchtime.
3. Students will be able to record their progress on a chart.
4. Students will practice addition by adding up the number of servings daily, weekly and monthly.
5. Students will compare their personal and whole class progress with an identified goal.

How to Play:

- **Hang up the chart in the classroom.** The chart is printed on synthetic paper, which will wipe off clean. Have dry-erase markers readily available near the chart (the kind that write on and wipe off so that you can reuse the chart next year!). You can even Velcro the markers to the chart!
- **Set a classroom goal.** The goal is set by multiplying the number of school days in the month by the number of students in the class by 1.5 servings. For example, the month of February may have 15 school days and your classroom has 20 students. The formula would be as follows:

$$15 \text{ days} \times 20 \text{ students} \times 1.5 \text{ servings fruits \& vegetables} = 450$$

The 450 becomes your monthly goal for the students to reach on the chart.

- **After lunch each day, have the students come up to the chart** and make an X in the numbered boxes, putting one X for each fruit or vegetable eaten, one X per box. A taste is all that is necessary. Be sure to have students bringing lunches from home participate as well as those students purchasing school lunch. Notify parents of the challenge to encourage their support and participation.
- **Plan a special tasting party or offer small incentives to the students when the goal is reached.** These incentives may include pencils, stickers, magnets, special privileges, etc. Here is where your food service director may be able to assist you by preparing special items for the classroom or recognizing the students in the cafeteria. You may even want to post your results in the cafeteria for other classes to see the progress.
- **Tell Team Nutrition and Connecticut Team Nutrition about your challenge so we can feature your class on our Web sites!** www.fns.usda.gov/tn and www.team.uconn.edu.

Annual Marketing Calendar: Healthy School Meals

Define Promotion

Month	Theme	Food	Dates	Campus Events	Holidays
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					

Annual Marketing Calendar: Healthy School Meals

Publicize Promotion (Print)

Month	Banners/ Posters	Brochures	Flyers Invitations	Printed Menus	Newsletter	School Newspaper	Quiz	Tabletop Questions
July								
August								
September								
October								
November								
December								
January								
February								
March								
April								
May								
June								

Annual Marketing Calendar: Healthy School Meals

Merchandising

Prizes/Incentives

Month	Bulletin Board	Dress	Garnish	Menu Board	Place on Line	Book-marks	Buttons	Fanny Packs	Frisbees	Magnets
July										
August										
September										
October										
November										
December										
January										
February										
March										
April										
May										
June										

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Food and Nutrition Service
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